

**Linda Clair**  
**Five-day Meditation Retreat**  
**Kallara Conference Center, November-December 2021**  
**Transcription from Audio Recordings**

**File 3B – Tuesday morning discussion**

Linda: Is it good to be back A.?

Question: Yes, it's better than I thought.

Linda: How do you think it was going to be?

Question: Well, we sit every day, G. and I, but you forget that there's other dynamics happening that aren't present at home.

Linda: Yes, when you get out of your comfort zone, go somewhere else, you're round a whole lot of people, it is different. More challenging would you say?

Question: Yes, probably, not in big ways, but just different.

Linda: What about you G.?

Question: Yes, it's been very challenging for me. Just coming back, it's been full of trigger points for me. I've taken them on board – I haven't felt they've been negative at all – it's just that I've seen how my role has changed and how I have changed also. And that's a question I'd like to ask of you. It happened when we were setting up for the sound system, but now because of my changed condition, I often forget people's names and I'm not able to hold concepts together. That happened when I was putting up the sound system and I couldn't see how everything was working. And you quite kindly gave a few pointers for me, which were very useful. I would like to hear if you have anything to add to that conversation, or just generally if you can offer me advice for dealing with the situations I often find myself in now.

Linda: Well, I can't remember the pointers! (laughing)

Question: I can remember the pointers. You said, when I can't remember something to just go back to my breath and to just allow whatever happens to happen. And that it's not really a gift – because I do struggle with that – but that it's one of the situations you often find yourself in but it doesn't bother you at all, you just keep on.

Linda: Oh, I remember now. It's true. But at first it did bother me when I couldn't remember something, whether it's someone's name or something ridiculous, like you go, "What's this called?" and

you just can't remember, and I felt something in me that just kept going, "What is it, what is it?" So when that happens you use it as a practice and do your best to not do that and not get into it.

I forget people's names now really regularly, though now it doesn't bother me. I just leave it, try and bluff my way out of it sometimes, sometimes I just don't remember. So what you're experiencing, whether it's from the brain thing, or to do with this, or a combination – I feel it's a combination – and you've been plunged into this different realm, this different dimension. Whereas, I suppose, with me it was more gradual and then when it happened I was ready. So some things are probably physical. When you get really tired you find it even harder to function.

But I find that as well – there are some definite parallels. But the main this is if you can't remember something – and this goes for everyone – don't try and remember. It's not like we're trying to forget but you've got to stop this habit of trying to remember. It's such a strong thing to think, "I've got to know. I've got to know that the name of..." Who cares what the name of someone or something is, it doesn't matter. There's this fear it's some sort of dementia thing or Alzheimer's. But I'd say it's mainly this, with some of that physical injury that happened to you as well.

Question: What's fascinated me is that I could possibly use this in my practice.

Linda: You can, because what you're describing is what I feel, which sounds to some people like something is wrong with me. But you have to actually, as I said, practice *not trying* to remember. That urge to remember is so strong, to know something, to know this, to know that. But what happens is that your head starts to clear out and after a while – and it does take quite a while – you really appreciate not having all this stuff. And usually, you remember what you need to remember, because it's a body memory.

I suppose when you've had a brain trauma it does affect your body memory to a certain degree, so you have to practice doing certain things. But it's how I do things now too, I have to go over things again and again with my body. But a lot of stuff I just don't want to know anymore, and I survive pretty well most of the time. There're things I forget – like I forgot the clacker thing and the bell (laughing) and then something else. But what does it matter forgetting a few things? So just practice not trying to remember. So when it keeps going at you or you get really frustrated, take a few breaths and just do your best to let it go. But you have to keep on to it because it will keep coming back and then your mind will come in and go: "No, you've got to remember this. Oh, I can't remember – that's terrible." But it's something you do become accustomed to, and it becomes incredibly freeing after a while, but it does take time.

Initially I did get frustrated with it because I wanted to remember things, to remember how to do things. And we tend to feel we can't function without our memory. But most of the things that are in our heads are emotional memories, and they are only there because they are emotional memories. The things that we remember most vividly are the most traumatic events and the most pleasurable events we've had. We store them and everything else we do is triggered by those events – those emotional traumas usually, or pleasures, that we've had – the extreme emotional things. And then everything we think we want to do is to either avoid the trauma or go towards the pleasure. So when

that all starts to clear out the intention behind everything changes, it becomes so much more pure. I was sitting this morning and I felt just like the weather – this incredibly clear, warm, sunny, with this light breeze – that’s what happens. It’s not clogged up with all this stuff – “I’ve got to know this, I’ve got to know that.” But it does take time, and you have to practice, use it as a practice.

Question: Thank you, that’s been very helpful. So when it happens I just need to relax, take a step back, and watch my breath.

Linda: You really don’t need to know, you don’t need to know anything. Peter used to say that: “I don’t know anything,” and he’d start laughing. That’s what happens, you don’t know anything and you don’t want to know anything really. (laughing)

You’ve had some long sits haven’t you?

Question: Yes, and it was about as far away from your experience as you can imagine.

Linda: I did have pain, so from this old injury, I did have quite a bit of pain. It was really interesting because there was such absence there. There was awareness of this – well, I’ll call it pain – but what was it? It was energy, pain. It was there most of the time then the last twenty minutes – because I did a long sit too – it just went, it went away.

Question: I just missed the breeze, that’s the only thing I missed. (laughter) I got all of the pain and definitely felt the energy but I just missed out on the breeze, but that’s okay.

Linda: The breeze was so lovely, it was just like the weather, the clarity and warmth. But the pain, there was almost no one there feeling the pain. It was like there was pain there but nobody feeling it. There was an awareness of this strong sensation but there was no one there.

Question: I’d have to say that the pain was very severe but it has changed since I last had a very long sit, and there was some separation there where I didn’t feel I was really fully attached to it in some way.

Linda: Where did you get it?

Question: Mostly in my legs and my knees, but also moving around.

Linda: Eventually that will go. So just keep doing what you’re doing, feeling it. It keeps you here, forces you to be here. It’s not unnecessary pain.

Question: Yes, I felt it was good pain as much as you could say that. And the quality of the energy was different too. It was severe but I had some separation from it, even though I was in so-called agony I didn’t need to move and I could watch it, and I appreciate it.

Linda: Yes, it's different when you start to accept it and appreciate it, which doesn't mean you enjoy it. Good.

Question: I got quite emotional when G. spoke. I haven't met G. before, and I was thinking how little it matters that he can't remember things because he's such a lovely being to be around. Then later I was sitting beside him when he did his long sit – and I did a really short sit comparatively – and had L. on the other side, and it reminded me of rugby league days when I had these big props on either side and I was this little hooker (laughter) and they were really tough and I was pretty pathetic. And because both my parents had dementia and forgot a lot of things, that was in there a bit. But I just felt very moved, which was quite lovely really.

And just generally this has been quite a challenge for me. Normally I'm used to the body pain, but the mind has been going crazy. Even before coming, generally, I feel incredibly vulnerable, fearful, sensitive. Someone talking earlier about catching up with people from the past but the person I'm catching up with is me, like a very young me. It feels like there was something very real about how I was, and then all the compensations I did to cover those feelings up as an adult – to appear to be confident and competent and everything. It feels to do with this work, and it strangely feels like progress.

Linda: Being able to feel vulnerable is progress. So another big reason for the stability that we were talking about, and being grounded, is so that you are able to be vulnerable. Particularly for men, in general, it is more difficult to accept being vulnerable. But you have to be very strong to really open up and be vulnerable, because you know someone could attack you, and people often do. In this situation I would say you're pretty safe because everyone is feeling vulnerable – that same rawness at times, vulnerability, self-consciousness, everything all rolled into one, just opening up. So being able to be vulnerable, even though it can be seen as a weakness, in this practice it is a sign of opening up. It's not that you're not going to feel hurt at times, but don't contract again, try and stay as open as you can. Some of the things with not remembering things when you're doing this are similar to symptoms of Alzheimer's, but then you realise it is different thing, it's completely different. But it can be a bit off-putting when you start to forget things.

So good, thank you.

Question: I'm still grappling with your statement that all thoughts come from fear. My problem with that is that I don't feel fear, except for situations where my lizard brain goes to fight, flight or freeze. Maybe my thoughts cover up all the fear, but in moments when I don't think I don't feel fear either, so what's wrong with me?

Linda: Well, that's what I'm saying. When you don't think, you don't feel fear. It's only the times like you were describing, in a situation where there's not time to think and you take action to do something. You see someone drowning in the water and you jump in and get them. There's no fear involved, there's just spontaneous pure action. If you thought about it, you probably wouldn't do it because you go, "Oh, the water's cold. I might drown." That's what real bravery is.

Question: But where's the fear beneath the thoughts?

Linda: You don't see it until the end. I couldn't see it, though I knew there was fear in me. If someone had said, "You're going to die tomorrow," I would have had fear. I wasn't so aware of the fear until the fear went. It wasn't until most of the fear dissolved that I realised how much was there, how in every movement I made there was some degree of fear. My behaviour, even though at the time when I was doing things I didn't know I was scared, it was deep down motivated by fear. The thoughts, the thinking – the reason you think is to avoid being in the body, and you avoid being in the body because you know that when you die you're totally in your body, there's no escape. And it is going to be now. So thinking is a way of avoiding now, creating this past and future where you're virtually never here now. It's always yesterday or tomorrow, some other time, any time but now. If we believe that my body is where I start, it's who I am, there's going to be a deep fear of the death of the body, because, "That's the end of me, there'll be nothing, and I want to be immortal, I want to stay here as long as possible." It sounds crazy but...

Question: The things with the outer body experience or the avoiding of now don't sound crazy at all, what I don't see is the fear.

Linda: Well, don't try and see it. You just have to trust me. Don't try and see. I couldn't do it either and I wasn't aware of this great fear. Of course there was fear there but I wasn't at all aware of the depth of it until it went, and then I was. So don't look for it. Don't believe me though; you have to test all this in your own experience.